

# Participant Information Statement

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEW SOUTH WALES



NATIONAL CENTRE IN  
HIV SOCIAL RESEARCH

## The Cybersex Project

Sharing views and experiences regarding  
online chatting and sex with partners met online

This page contains all the information you should be aware of before participating in the Cybersex project.

### About the project

We want to understand how the Internet shapes the sexuality of gay and bisexual men and how online chat and fantasising impact on sexual and risk behaviours in real life.

The survey asks questions about your motivation for going online and about your online practices and habits. You will also be invited to describe the type of interactions you have had online or intend to have with your chat partners as well as the sexual behaviours you participate in when you meet them in real life.

### Who is being asked to respond?

You are eligible for the study if you are a man aged 16 years and above and if you live in the state of New South Wales in Australia. The study is open to participants with various levels of experience towards cyber chat and sex with partners met online.

### The study components

The study consists of two main components: an online survey and an optional face-to-face interview.

#### The online survey

The online survey consists of two components: an initial questionnaire (duration 15 to 20 minutes) and a short follow-up questionnaire (duration 7 to 10 minutes) that will be sent to consenting participants 3 months after they completed the initial questionnaire.

You can decide to complete the initial survey only, or complete both the initial survey and the short follow-up questionnaire.

#### The face-to-face interview

A small number of participants who have agreed to take part in the qualitative arm of the study will be randomly selected for a face-to-face interview.

If you agree to a face-to-face interview, the researcher will ask you about your motivation for going online and about your online practices and habits. You will also be invited to describe the type of interactions you have online with your chat partners as well as the sexual behaviours you participate in when you meet them in real life. The interview will last approximately one hour.

You will be reimbursed directly for your travel expenses.

## *Participant information statement (continued)*

### **Warning**

This survey contains some explicit questions about sexual practices between men, as well as questions on HIV and STI transmission. If you are not comfortable answering such questions we advise you not to take part in the survey.

### **Confidentiality**

To participate in specific aspects of this survey you will be asked to provide an email address. Your email address will be kept strictly confidential and will not be linked to your survey responses. To enhance confidentiality you should preferably provide an email address that does NOT include your name. Regardless, nobody will be able to link this to the information you provide.

To be able to analyse the qualitative interviews we would like to audio-record the interviews. Strict procedures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality. Following transcription of the interview your real name will be replaced with a pseudonym. In addition, all other details you mention that might identify you or others will be changed (e.g. your chat profile name, the name of your workplace, friends, colleagues and venues attended). Original digital recordings will be securely stored and only the study investigators will have access to the audio files and transcribed interviews.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, except as required by law. If you give us your permission by signing this document, we plan to publish the results in academic papers and in community magazines. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

### **Risks and benefits**

We do not anticipate any specific risks associated with your participation in this study. Similarly, we cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits as a result of your participation.

In the unlikely event that answering the questionnaire or participating in the interview raise concerns or create discomfort, we would encourage you to contact a counselling and support service that provides specific services related to sexuality, HIV or sexual health (see section below). During the interview the research team can offer de-briefing and referral on to other support services if required.

The survey results will help to improve sexual health programs for gay men and other men who have sex with men who use the internet to interact with potential sex partners.

### **Payment and reimbursement for participants**

There will be no payment provided to participants of this study but you may win up to \$800 in vouchers.

Completing each of the questionnaires will give you the chance to win a \$400 voucher. This means that you can win a \$400 voucher if you complete the initial questionnaire and up to \$800 in vouchers if you complete both the initial questionnaire and the short follow-up survey in three months from now.

Participants who complete multiple questionnaires to increase their chance of winning the prize will be eliminated from the competition.

## **Feedback to participants**

Preliminary results will be available from July 2012. Feedback about the results of the project will be provided through the National Centre in HIV Social Research (NCHSR), ACON and AFAO.

The easiest way to access the survey result will be to consult either this website [cybersexproject.net](http://cybersexproject.net) or the NCHSR website: <http://nchsr.arts.unsw.edu.au>. The results will also be available through our 'cybersexproject' Facebook page. Participants can also opt for receiving the survey results by email.

## **Your consent and participation**

You will be asked to give your informed consent online if you decide to take part in the online quantitative survey. Participants who join the qualitative study will have to provide a written informed consent prior to participation to the interviews and group discussion.

Your participation is voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with the University of New South Wales, ACON or AFAO. You are free to discontinue the survey at any time.

## **Withdrawal**

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time.

### **Withdrawal from the online quantitative study**

You will not be able to withdraw from the online study after submitting your responses to the initial online survey. However, you will have the option of de-registering from the study at any time if you don't want to receive the follow-up questionnaire or be contacted for an interview.

To withdraw, simply send an email to the survey's Chief investigator at [ph.adam@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ph.adam@unsw.edu.au) with the words 'STOP CYBERSEX SURVEY' in the subject heading. You can also de-register by phoning 02 9385 6776. A drop out option is also included in all the emails that will be sent to you.

### **Withdrawal from the online quantitative study**

If you withdraw consent after your face-to-face interview, your interview will not be included in the study analysis.

## **Information and support services**

Local organisations in New South Wales provide counselling and support services related to HIV as well as other services such as information about safe sex, HIV treatments and sexually transmissible infections.

### *Participant information statement (continued)*

ACON provides a range of counselling, therapy and support services. Contact ACON's Counselling Team on (02) 9206 2000 or 1800 063 060. For the hearing impaired, call (02) 9283 2088.

The NSW Sexual Health Infoline also provides free and confidential sexual health information 1800 451 624 (NSW only).

Other valuable information related to safe sex, sexually transmitted infections and their treatments can also be found at [www.thedramadownunder.info](http://www.thedramadownunder.info)

### **Contact us**

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please feel free to ask us. You can contact Dr Philippe Adam, the survey's Chief investigator at [ph.adam@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ph.adam@unsw.edu.au) or by phoning 02 9385 6776.

### **Complaints**

Complaints may be directed to:  
The Ethics Secretariat  
The University of New South Wales  
Sydney 2052  
Tel: 9385 4234  
Fax: 9385 6648  
[ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au)

Any complaint you make will be investigated promptly and you will be informed of the outcome.

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[www.cybersexproject.net](http://www.cybersexproject.net)